

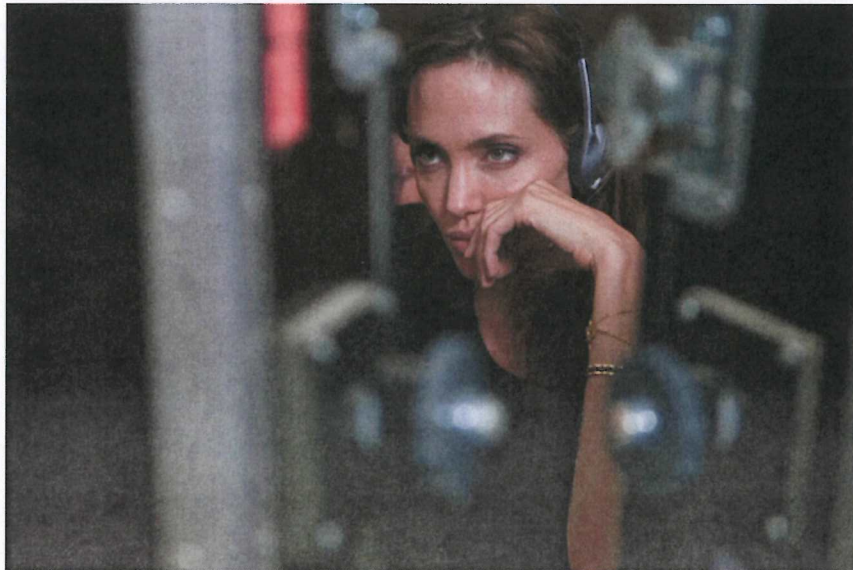
## YAHOO! MOVIES

The weekend is coming.

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# Angelina Jolie Takes No Prisoners in War Drama 'In the Land of Blood and Honey'

By Thelma Adams | [The Reel Breakdown](#) – Fri, Jan 6, 2012 1:31 PM EST



I'm not crying for Angelina Jolie. Still, one downside to celebrity is that the individual gets pigeon-holed. Every time Angelina strays from what the public and the media expect, she takes a risk. Steal Jen's man? OK. Get a new tattoo? All right. Adopt a kid? So Mia Farrow!

But write, direct, and produce a serious movie? Wait a minute. Has she gone too far?

Case in point: Angelina's directorial debut, the R-rated "In the Land of Blood and Honey." Here's a serious-as-death drama. It's in Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, with English subtitles. It stars unknowns with unpronounceable names. Read: box-office poison.

On its opening weekend, "Blood and Honey" earned \$18,854 playing in three theaters. Its first week found a gross of \$55,000. That's not even Angelina's nanny budget. In contrast, even the roundly slammed "The Tourist" opened at \$16 million and eventually turned a profit, with an international gross of \$278 million.

[See showtimes for 'In the Land of Blood and Honey' >>](#)

And, despite a Golden Globe nomination for best foreign-language film, Angelina's movie has run aground on grudging reviews that often pay more attention to the woman behind the camera than the story on the screen. Take this critical response from my colleague Stephen Witty at the Newark Star-Ledger, who begins his review this way:

Asking recently about "In the Land of Blood and Honey," a friend was a little worried that it might be ... good. Angelina Jolie, she explained, was so beautiful, so rich, and so married to Brad Pitt -- well, if she turned out to be a great director too, it just might be too much for a normal woman to bear. Well, no worries. Angelina Jolie is still beautiful, rich, and married to Brad Pitt. But judging by "In the Land of Blood and Honey," there's still at least one thing even she could use a little improvement in.

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In "Box Office Magazine," Nick Schager concludes: "this wannabe-serious film comes off as not just unenlightening, but borderline-interminable." Ouch!

There's no avoiding it: "In the Land of Blood and Honey" is tough going. The Balkan "Romeo and Juliet" revolves around a Bosnian Muslim artist (Zana Marjanovic) and a Serbian Christian soldier (Goran Kotic) who are on opposite sides of the region's ethnic divide. "I think it is still hard to understand what happened," Jolie told writer Chris Connelly in Marie Claire this month, "and how it could happen 40 minutes away from Italy in the '90s, at the time 'Schindler's List' came out."

#### **[The Academy seems to think women can't direct traffic, much less 'Traffic' >>](#)**

Rather than romanticizing the couple's relationship, Jolie shows how it is degraded and defiled by the bloody conflict. The war outside irreparably alters the power relationship in the bedroom (she's his captive). There's no shortage of sex in the movie, but it's often rape.

And, despite the title, the drama has more blood than honey. "Some of the very darkest sections of the film were conceived in Shiloh's art class," Jolie told Marie Claire. "I was in the back, waiting for the kids to finish."

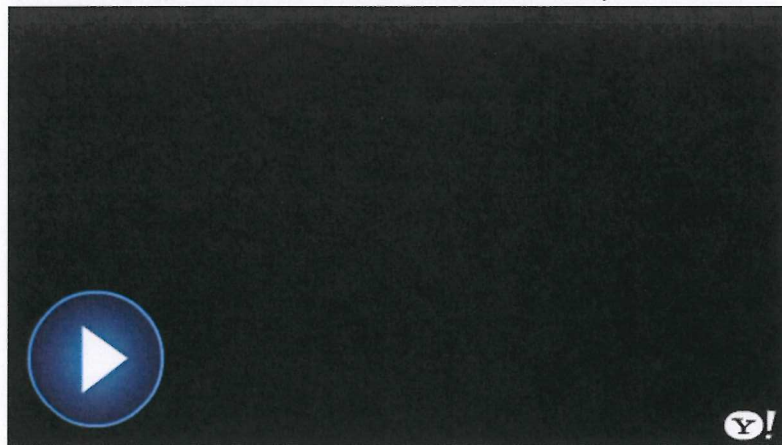
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This month's Marie Claire cover profile article reflects the complex imaging of Jolie: mother, lover, sex symbol, artist, and humanitarian. It slides between keyhole nuggets of the celebrity's private life, with the mention of Shiloh; a photo shoot of Jolie vamping in black pajamas behind a movie camera; and a respectful mention of the way her film is an extension of her U.N. mission to bear witness to atrocities around the world.

In Jolie's best performances, she draws on some thing rough and fearless and a little self-destructive within herself. Her directorial debut reflects that complex core -- and has a clear point of view, passion, and strong acting. It's an impressive debut from a thoughtful, compassionate, sexual artist. Give Jolie her props: The Golden Globe nomination isn't just an attempt to curry favor to get her to attend the awards dinner beside best-actor nominee Pitt; she definitely earned her free meal. And I, for one, am interested to see what she'll do next.

[Click here](#) for more Yahoo! Golden Globes highlights. Complete coverage of the red carpet and the show begins at 4 p.m. PT on January 15.

#### **See the trailer for 'In the Land of Blood and Honey':**



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